



Department of Energy
Richland Operations Office
P.O. Box 550
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07-OEC-0057

AUG 28 2007

Ms. Susan L. Leckband, Chair
Hanford Advisory Board
Enviroissues Hanford Project Office
713 Jadwin, Suite 4
Richland, WA 99352

Dear Ms. Leckband:

**HANFORD ADVISORY BOARD (HAB) CONSENSUS ADVICE #196 – WORKERS’
COMPENSATION**

Thank you for the Hanford Advisory Board (HAB) Advice # 196 Workers Compensation Program, dated June 8, 2007. We appreciate the time and effort the HAB has spent learning more about the Workers’ Compensation Program and our initiatives to enhance and improve the program.

We have taken several actions to improve the program and believe we have addressed the Board’s advice. These actions include the assignment of a full-time federal employee responsible for advocating and managing a proactive program and working with claimants and the U.S. Department of Energy’s (DOE) third party administrator, Contract Claims Service, Inc. (CCSI). This staff member will identify and make improvements and ensure claimants are provided accurate information on the status of their claims. She will also work to improve communication with and among the covered site contractors, the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, CCSI, the site occupational medical provider, and worker advocacy organizations.

Our staff has discussed many of these recent improvements with the Health and Safety Committee. These improvements include:

- Streamlining the process to better inform claimants of the process. DOE has developed Self-Insurance Workers’ Compensation Medical Treatment Instructions and a Self-Insurance Work Status Activity Report for the contractor Workers’ Compensation representatives. This tool will assist employees when a claim is filed. The instructions and report are provided to claimants as a package of key information for the employee and his/her attending physician. The instructions identify contacts and information to assist employees and physicians and provide pertinent information to ensure employees have the required information when returning to work.
- Enhancing the partnership between CCSI and AdvanceMed Hanford. DOE established a monthly working group to help improve and strengthen communication and understanding among the programs.
- Participating actively in the Beryllium Awareness Group monthly meeting to provide workers’ compensation information and foster and address concerns and questions.

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- Working actively with CCSI to initiate vocational counseling earlier in the claim process to support a more timely return to work.
- Initiating direct one-on-one interaction with employees through meetings, telephone calls, and other associated media to provide information and facilitate resolution of issues and concerns.
- Developing and implementing a Hanford Workers' Compensation webpage located on the Hanford website. The website is located at www.hanford.gov. The website includes links to a variety of workers' compensation information including guiding documents, and other resource information.
- Coordinating a Hanford Workers' Compensation claimant wallet card to assist with the management of claims and provide a tool to ensure claims are processed with accurate case information.
- Initiating educational briefings on workers' compensation and policies associated with treatment expectations and return to work policies. Participants included contractors' Workers' Compensation representatives and Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council (HAMTC) Safety Representatives. DOE received positive feedback and recommendations to expand the briefings with a broader audience including contractor safety representatives, labor relations and human resources staff and union representatives. Based on feedback from the HAB, DOE is seeking mechanisms to provide workers' compensation information to current and new employees through a DVD or similar media
- Actively oversee CCSI activities to ensure the performance of customer service and contract reporting requirements are met.

In response to your advice regarding the application of the Worker Safety and Health Rule 10 CFR 851, DOE has clear contractor safety expectations and goals outlined within our contracts. The contracts have safety performance and reporting requirements and penalties for failing to meet such requirements. DOE also performs routine oversight of the occupational injury and illness reporting processes implemented by the contractors. Recently, as required, DOE approved the contractor plans for compliance with the Worker Safety and Health Rule 10 CFR 851.

We also appreciate and are considering your recommendation to establish metrics to measure workers' compensation improvement progress.

Although we have made great strides to improve the program, we welcome suggestions on further improvements to provide a safe working environment with an efficient and responsive workers' compensation program. We look forward to sharing and providing updates on our progress.

Ms. Susan L. Leckband
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If you have any questions, please contact me, or Karen Lutz, at (509) 376-4766.

Sincerely,



David A. Brockman
Manager

OEC:KEL

cc: See page 4

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